Denka, formerly DuPont, manufactures the chemical chloroprene to make neoprene synthetic rubber. The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) reclassified chloroprene as a likely carcinogen in 2010. That reclassification was reflected in the National Air Toxics Assessment (NATA) map released by EPA in December 2015. The map showed an elevated risk for cancer in the area around the Denka plant in LaPlace, La. An elevated risk of cancer means that people have an increased chance of developing cancer because of continuous inhalation exposure to chloroprene **over a lifetime**.

What is the NATA's purpose?

The purpose of NATA is to identify and prioritize air toxics, emission source types and locations that are of greatest potential concern in terms of contributing to population risk. NATA uses estimates of emissions from the facility and the EPA computer models to measure concentrations of chloroprene in the air and the potential population health risks; it is not designed to determine actual health risks to individual people. EPA uses the results of these assessments in many ways, including to:

*   Work with communities in designing their own local-scale assessments,To set priorities for improving data in emissions inventories, and

*   Set priorities for improving data in emissions inventories, and

*   Help direct priorities for expanding and improving the network of air toxics monitoring.

The Louisiana Department of Environmental Quality (LDEQ) has worked with EPA to measure concentrations of chloroprene using monitors around the facility. Six monitors are maintained by EPA in areas adjacent and near the plant. Additionally, Denka maintains six monitors of their own in and around their site. LDEQ receives data from both EPA and **Denka monitoring.**

The Administrative Order on Consent

Denka voluntarily agreed to take actions to reduce air pollution from the plant. LDEQ worked with Denka to craft an Administrative Order on Consent (AOC), a legal contract, in which Denka agreed to install a series of new control technologies and measures designed to reduce emissions of chloroprene by 85 percent from the facility's 2014 chloroprene emissions. EPA supports LDEQ setting an enforceable schedule to make the needed changes to the facility. Denka has committed to spend more than $17 million to reduce chloroprene emissions.

Under the AOC, emission reductions devices will be installed on a set schedule, culminating with the installation of the Regenerative Thermal Oxidizer (RTO) by the end of the fourth quarter of 2017. The first two phases have been installed and are operating. Denka has applied for an extension of time for installation of the third phase because of complexities in the engineering design for the modification. The final phase will be the installation of the RTO. The RTO is on-site **awaiting installation.**

What about .2?

Once the control measures are in place, LDEQ will again assess the emissions at the Denka facility. While there is currently no federal or state standard for allowable concentrations of chloroprene in the air, EPA has offered a concentration value of 0.2 micrograms per cubic meter (ug/m^3) to guide efforts to reduce emissions. The 0.2 ug/m^3 is not an air quality standard; it represents a guide for a lifetime (not short or daily) average.

Questions about the school
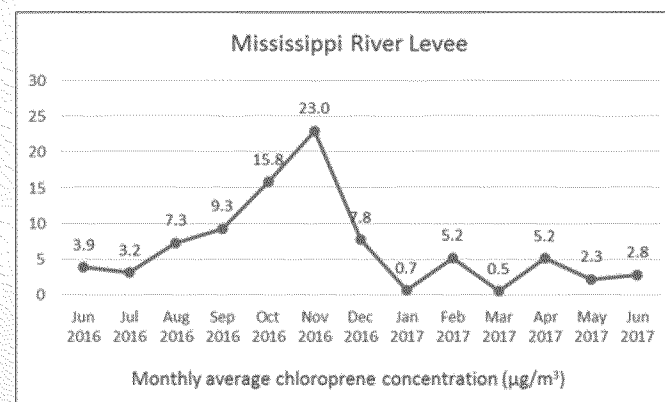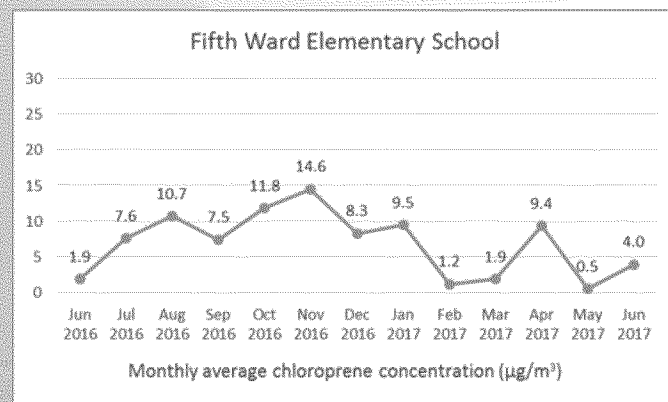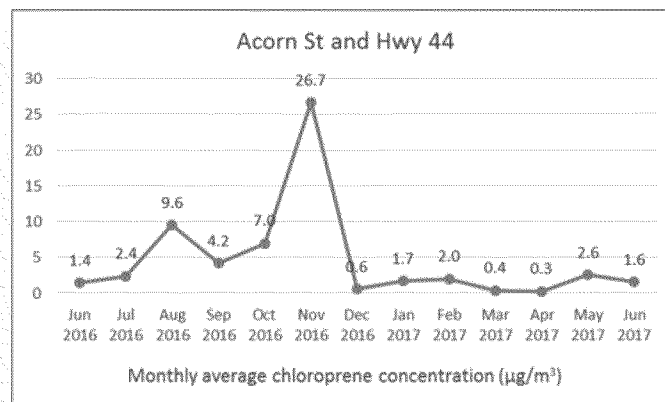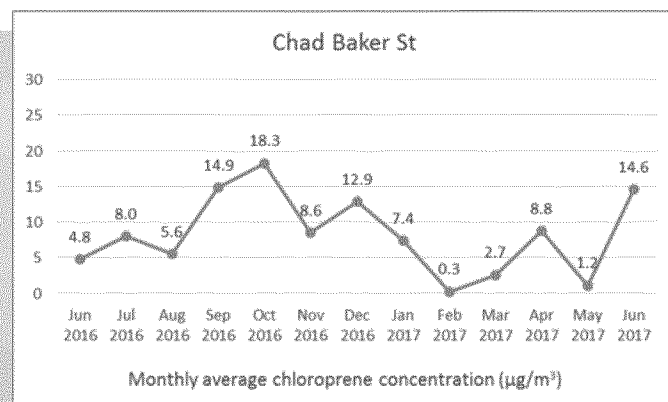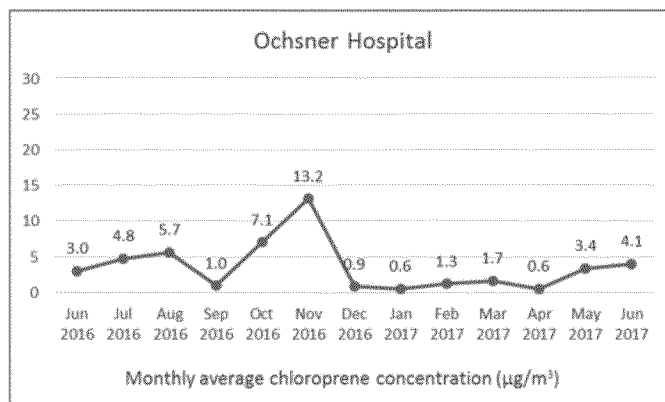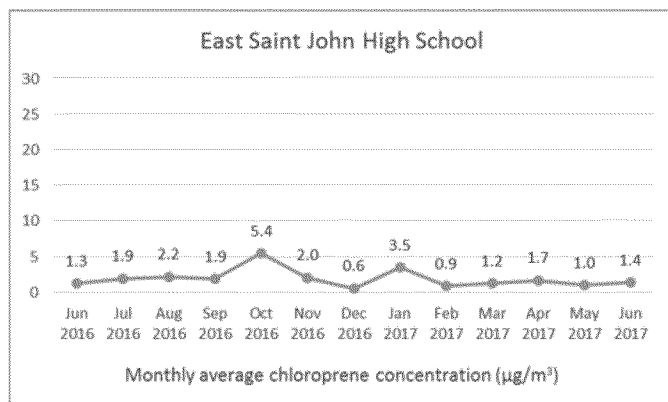
Some LaPlace residents voiced concerns about the risk at the 5th Ward Elementary School, which is near the Denka plant. The Louisiana Department of Health (LDH) and LDEQ conferred regarding the environmental status at the school. LDH officials indicated they have found no reason that children cannot attend the school. Monitoring results from the EPA monitor at this location and available on the EPA website (below) has shown elevated concentrations of chloroprene on some days. This does not indicate continuous exposure.

Monitoring results

For EPA's monitoring results, go to https://www.epa.gov/la/laplace-st-john-baptist-parish-louisiana

Here are the most recent month's monitoring results from EPA's monitors:

East Saint John High School

Monthly average chloroprene concentration (µg/m³)

Data points:
- Jun 2016: 1.3
- Jul 2016: 1.9
- Aug 2016: 2.2
- Sep 2016: 1.9
- Oct 2016: 5.4
- Nov 2016: 2.0
- Dec 2016: 0.6
- Jan 2017: 3.5
- Feb 2017: 0.9
- Mar 2017: 1.2
- Apr 2017: 1.7
- May 2017: 1.0
- Jun 2017: 1.4

Ochsner Hospital

Monthly average chloroprene concentration (µg/m³)

Data points:
- Jun 2016: 3.0
- Jul 2016: 4.8
- Aug 2016: 5.7
- Sep 2016: 1.0
- Oct 2016: 7.1
- Nov 2016: 13.2
- Dec 2016: 0.9
- Jan 2017: 0.6
- Feb 2017: 1.3
- Mar 2017: 1.7
- Apr 2017: 0.6
- May 2017: 3.4
- Jun 2017: 4.1

Chad Baker St

Monthly average chloroprene concentration (µg/m³)

Data points:
- Jun 2016: 4.8
- Jul 2016: 8.0
- Aug 2016: 5.6
- Sep 2016: 14.9
- Oct 2016: 18.3
- Nov 2016: 8.6
- Dec 2016: 12.9
- Jan 2017: 7.4
- Feb 2017: 0.3
- Mar 2017: 2.7
- Apr 2017: 8.8
- May 2017: 1.2
- Jun 2017: 14.6

Acorn St and Hwy 44

Monthly average chloroprene concentration (µg/m³)

Data points:
- Jun 2016: 1.4
- Jul 2016: 2.4
- Aug 2016: 9.6
- Sep 2016: 4.2
- Oct 2016: 7.0
- Nov 2016: 26.7
- Dec 2016: 0.6
- Jan 2017: 1.7
- Feb 2017: 2.0
- Mar 2017: 0.4
- Apr 2017: 0.3
- May 2017: 2.6
- Jun 2017: 1.6

Fifth Ward Elementary School

Monthly average chloroprene concentration (µg/m³)

Data points:
- Jun 2016: 1.9
- Jul 2016: 7.6
- Aug 2016: 10.7
- Sep 2016: 7.5
- Oct 2016: 11.8
- Nov 2016: 14.6
- Dec 2016: 8.3
- Jan 2017: 9.5
- Feb 2017: 1.2
- Mar 2017: 1.9
- Apr 2017: 9.4
- May 2017: 0.5
- Jun 2017: 4.0

Mississippi River Levee

Monthly average chloroprene concentration (µg/m³)

Data points:
- Jun 2016: 3.9
- Jul 2016: 3.2
- Aug 2016: 7.3
- Sep 2016: 9.3
- Oct 2016: 15.8
- Nov 2016: 23.0
- Dec 2016: 7.8
- Jan 2017: 0.7
- Feb 2017: 5.2
- Mar 2017: 0.5
- Apr 2017: 5.2
- May 2017: 2.3
- Jun 2017: 2.8